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(54) Recombinant immunoconjugates for therapy comprising interleukin 2

Interleukin 2 enthaltende rekombinante Immunkonjugate für die Therapie
Immunoconjugés recombinés pour la thérapie comprenant de l'interleukine 2

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EP-A- 0 336 631	EP-A- 0 350 230
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Description**1. INTRODUCTION**

5 The present invention relates to antibody based proteins in which a portion of an antibody which recognizes a tumor cell is linked to lymphokine IL-2, thereby providing a method for producing a targeted, amplified anti-tumor immune response.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**2.1. MONOCLONAL ANTIBODIES AS DIAGNOSTIC AND THERAPEUTIC REAGENTS**

10 Since the development of the cell fusion technique for the production of monoclonal antibodies (Kohler and Milstein, 1975, *Nature* 256:495), a vast number of monoclonal antibodies, many of which define heretofore unknown antigens, have been produced by a number of researchers. Concurrently, a number of techniques have been developed for the 15 generation of monoclonal antibodies, including the B cell hybridoma technique (Kozbor et al, 1983, *Immunology Today* 4:72) and the EBV hybridoma technique to produce human monoclonal antibodies (Cole et al., 1985, in "Monoclonal Antibodies and Cancer Therapy," Alan R. Liss, Inc. pp. 77-96).

20 Through hybridoma technology, monoclonal antibodies (Mab) can be developed that are capable of recognizing almost any determinant or epitope. The property of specific recognition and binding to particular cells has encouraged the development of Mabs as diagnostic and therapeutic reagents for a variety of disease states. Mabs have been obtained that recognize determinants preferentially expressed on tumor cells (Hellstrom et al., 1984 in "Monoclonal Antibodies and Cancer", Wright et. al. Marcel Dekker, Inc., N.Y., pp. 31-47) and are currently being evaluated in the clinic for their effectiveness as therapeutic agents.

2.2. USE OF MONOCLONAL ANTIBODIES AS TARGETING AGENTS

25 The ability of monoclonal antibodies (Mabs) to localize to tumor tissue has also led to the development of Mabs conjugated to various substances in an effort to target specific molecules to tumor sites (Hellstrom and Hellstrom, 1985, in "Monoclonal Antibodies for Tumor Detection and Drug Targeting," Baldwin et al. eds, Academic Press, N.Y. pp. 17-51). Linkages have been performed using toxins, drugs, radionuclides, and enzymes for the activation of prodrug compounds. Many of these linkages involve the chemical conjugation of the reactive moiety with a given preparation of antibody, a process which can be cumbersome and subject to variation. (U.S. Patent No. 4,671,958 by Rodwell et al., filed March 9, 1982, issued June 9, 1987).

30 Recently, recombinant DNA techniques have been used to produce genetically altered immunoglobulin molecules. For example, techniques have been developed to produce chimeric antibodies, which combine regions of immunoglobulin molecules from different sources (Morrison et al., 1984, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* 81:6581; Sahagan et al., 1986, *J. Immunol.* 137:1066; Sun et al., 1987, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* 84:214). Usually, chimeric antibodies combine an antigen-combining region (or variable region) from a non-human source and a constant region from a human 35 source.

40 Chimeric antibody technology has been extended to produce chimeric molecules comprising immunoglobulin and non-immunoglobulin portions. For example, International Patent Application No. PCT/GB85/00392 by Neuberger et al., filed September 3, 1985, and published March 13, 1986, describes the production of Fab-*Staphylococcus aureus* nucle-45 nase, Fab-myc, and Fab-Klenow fragment of DNA polymerase I chimeric antibodies (see also Neuberger et al., 1984, *Nature* 312:604-608 and Williams and Neuberger, 1986, *Gene* 43:319-324). Schnee et al. (1987, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* 84:6904-6908) describe the construction of a hybrid molecule comprising the variable region of an anti-fibrin antibody and the catalytic β -chain of tissue plasminogen activator.

45 EP-A-0 305 967 describes conjugates applicable in tumor therapy, wherein a cytokine is chemically linked to an antibody molecule.

50 EP-A-0 350 230 describes an immunoconjugate for cancer diagnosis and therapy comprising an anti-l5A8-anti-body chemically conjugated to a lymphokine or cytokine.

3. SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

55 The present invention relates to a system for the generation of antibody fusion proteins which has utility in the production of recombinant molecules that possess novel, clinically relevant biological activity. The antibody fusion proteins of the invention may be used therapeutically to deliver biologically active ligands to a desired tissue.

In particular, the antibody fusion protein of the invention comprises a biologically active ligand which is the lym-

phokine interleukin-2. Because interleukin-2 induces lymphocyte proliferation, fused antibody that targets interleukin-2 (IL-2) to a malignant or infected tissue can produce localized amplification of the immune response toward the diseased tissue, and thereby facilitate the destruction of the infected or malignant tissue. In a specific embodiment of the invention, a fused antibody is produced which comprises a variable region of the anti-tumor antigen monoclonal antibody L6 and active IL-2.

5 Additional embodiments of the invention relate to the use of said fusion proteins for preparing pharmaceutical compositions for treating tumors, recombinant DNA molecules encoding said fusion proteins and recombinant microorganisms producing said fusion proteins.

10 4. DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

Figure 1. Diagram of insertion of CH_1 into pUC18 vector.
 Figure 2. Diagram of insertion of PF-4 cDNA into CH_1 , Hinge-Bearing Vector.
 Figure 3. Diagram of insertion of construct into a mammalian expression vector.
 15 Figure 4. Production of PF-4/L6 fusion protein by cell lines transfected with PF-4/L6 expression vector, as measured by reactivity with anti-L6 idiotype antibody.
 Figure 5. Inhibition of binding of anti-PF-4 antibody to PF-4/L6 fusion protein by increasing concentrations of free PF-4.
 20 Figure 6. Diagram of strategy for the generation of IL-2/L6 fusion proteins. (a) insertion of IL-2 cDNA into pUC18 vector containing C_{H_1} and 3' untranslated regions (3'uT) from the mouse immunoglobulin gene locus with incorporation of hinge/linker sequences; (b) final expression vector comprising SV40_{ori} promoter and the neo resistance gene.
 Figure 7. Exact hinge (a) and hinge-linker (b) sequences.
 Figure 8. Procedure of producing IL-2 cDNA for cloning.
 25 Figure 9. Coding portion of IL-2 amplified in polymerase chain reaction.
 Figure 10. Chimeric light chain vector cotransfected with pIL-2/L6.

5. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

30 The present invention relates to a system for the generation of therapeutic antibody fusion proteins. In particular, the present invention relates to therapeutic antibody fusion proteins as well as the recombinant DNA molecules utilized in their production. For purposes of clarity of disclosure, and not by way of limitation, the detailed description of the invention will be divided into the following subsections:

35 (i) construction of recombinant genes encoding antibody fusion proteins;
 (ii) expression of antibody fusion proteins; and
 (iii) utility of the invention.

5.1. CONSTRUCTION OF RECOMBINANT GENES ENCODING ANTIBODY FUSION PROTEINS

40 The antibody-based fusion proteins of the invention comprise (i) a portion of an immunoglobulin molecule capable of directing the fusion protein to a tumor cell or tumor associated antigen and (ii) an interleukin 2 molecule. The recombinant genes encoding the antibody fusion proteins of the invention may be constructed using any technique known in the art of molecular biology, including but not limited to the following.

45 The targeting portion of the molecule may comprise all or part of an immunoglobulin variable region which may, in turn, be comprised of regions encoded by a V gene and/or D gene and/or J gene. In preferred embodiments of the invention, the antibody fusion proteins comprise a portion corresponding to the hinge region of an immunoglobulin molecule, or a functional equivalent thereof which would provide flexibility between the globular domains of the antibody-based fusion protein. A functional hinge may be important in retaining targeting ability. Variable regions of antibody, particularly monoclonal antibody, that recognize tumor-specific antigens may be used in fusion proteins of the invention.

50 Ligands which may be incorporated into the antibody-based fusion proteins of the invention include interleukin-2 (Weil-Hillman et al., 1988, J. Biol. Response Mod. 7:424).

55 Recombinant nucleic acid molecules which encode the immunoglobulin or lymphokine may be obtained by any method known in the art (Maniatis et al., 1982, Molecular Cloning; A Laboratory Manual, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Cold Spring Harbor, NY) or obtained from publicly available clones. For example, nucleic acid encoding a lymphokine may be obtained as follows. A population of cells known to actively express the factor may be obtained, and total cellular RNA may be harvested therefrom. Amino acid sequence of the factor may be used to deduce the sequence of a portion of the factor's nucleic acid so as to design appropriate oligonucleotide primers, or, alternatively,

the oligonucleotide primers may be obtained from a known nucleic acid sequence which encodes the factor. The oligonucleotide fragment may then be used in conjunction with reverse transcriptase to produce cDNA corresponding to factor-encoding nucleotide sequence (Okayama et al., 1987, *Methods Enzymol.* 154:3-29). The cDNA can then be cloned, and/or portions of the factor coding region may then be amplified from this cDNA using polymerase chain reaction and appropriate primer sequences, (Saiki et al., 1988, *Science* 239:487-491).

In particular embodiments of the invention, a recombinant vector system may be created to accommodate sequences encoding the ligand in the correct reading frame with a natural or synthetic hinge region. For example, and not by way of limitation, the hinge region of the human IgG₁ constant region may be used; in a specific embodiment of the invention, the constant region exon encoding the C_{H1} domain of human IgG₁ may be cloned as a HindIII-PstI fragment into the vector pUC18 to which may be joined, using standard restriction enzyme techniques, a modified version of the human hinge region sequences of human IgG₁. In the modified version of the human hinge region, the two cysteine residues that normally mediate interchain disulfide linkage may be replaced by codons specifying proline and serine so as to permit greater flexibility in the fused molecule; in this specific embodiment the sequence of the hinge region may be EPKSCDKTHTPPPSPGRVVGGRA.

Additionally, it may be desirable to include, as part of the recombinant vector system, nucleic acids corresponding to the 3' flanking region of an immunoglobulin gene including RNA cleavage/polyadenylation sites and downstream sequences; according to a specific embodiment of the invention, this nucleotide sequence provides the mRNA with the 3' untranslated region of the secretory form of the murine C_μ gene. Furthermore, it may be desirable to engineer a signal sequence upstream of the antibody fusion protein-encoding sequences to facilitate the secretion of the fused molecule from a cell transformed with the recombinant vector.

Nucleic acid sequences encoding the various components of the antibody-based fusion proteins of the invention may be joined together using any techniques known in the art, including restriction enzyme methodologies and the use of synthetic linker sequences.

To provide for adequate transcription of the recombinant constructs of the invention, a suitable promoter/enhancer sequence may preferably be incorporated into the recombinant vector. Promoters which may be used to control the expression of the antibody-based fusion protein include, but are not limited to, the SV40 early promoter region (Benoist and Chambon, 1981, *Nature* 290:304-310), the promoter contained in the 3' long terminal repeat of Rous sarcoma virus (Yamamoto, et al., 1980, *Cell* 22:787-797), the herpes thymidine kinase promoter (Wagner et al., 1981, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* 78:1444-1445), the regulatory sequences of the metallothioneine gene (Brinster et al., 1982, *Nature* 296:39-42); prokaryotic expression systems such as the LAC, or β-lactamase promoter (Villa-Kamaroff, et al., 1978, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* 75:3727-3731), or the tac λ phage promoter (DeBoer, et al., 1983, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* 80:21-25), see also "Useful proteins from recombinant bacteria" in *Scientific American*, 1980, 242:74-94; plant expression vectors comprising the nopaline synthetase promoter region (Herrera-Estrella et al., *Nature* 303:209-213) or the cauliflower mosaic virus 35S RNA promoter (Gardner, et al., 1981, *Nucl. Acids Res.* 9:2871), and the promoter for the photosynthetic enzyme ribulose biphosphate carboxylase (Herrera-Estrella et al., 1984, *Nature* 310:115-120); promoter elements from yeast or other fungi such as the Gal 4 promoter, the ADC (alcohol dehydrogenase) promoter, PGK (phosphoglycerol kinase) promoter, alkaline phosphatase promoter, and the following animal transcriptional control regions, which exhibit tissue specificity and have been utilized in transgenic animals: elastase I gene control region which is active in pancreatic acinar cells (Swift et al., 1984, *Cell* 38:639-646; Ornitz et al., 1986, *Cold Spring Harbor Symp. Quant. Biol.* 50:399-409; MacDonald, 1987, *Hepatology* 7:425-515); insulin gene enhancers or promoters which are active in pancreatic beta cells (Hanahan, 1985, *Nature* 315:115-122), immunoglobulin gene enhancers or promoters which are active in lymphoid cells (Grosschedl et al., 1984, *Cell* 38:647-658; Adames et al., 1985, *Nature* 318:533-538; Alexander et al., 1987, *Mol. Cell. Biol.* 7:1436-1444), the cytomegalovirus early promoter and enhancer regions (Boshart et al., 1985, *Cell* 41:521-530), mouse mammary tumor virus control region which is active in testicular, breast, lymphoid and mast cells (Leder et al., 1986, *Cell* 45:485-495), albumin gene control region which is active in liver (Pinkert et al., 1987, *Genes and Devel.* 1:268-276), alpha-fetoprotein gene control region which is active in liver (Krumlauf et al., 1985, *Mol. Cell. Biol.* 5:1639-1648; Hammer et al., 1987, *Science* 235:53-58); alpha 1-antitrypsin gene control region which is active in the liver (Kelsey et al., 1987, *Genes and Devel.* 1:161-171), beta-globin gene control region which is active in myeloid cells (Mogram et al., 1985, *Nature* 315:338-340; Kollias et al., 1986, *Cell* 46:89-94; myelin basic protein gene control region which is active in oligodendrocyte cells in the brain (Readhead et al., 1987, *Cell* 48:703-712); myosin light chain-2 gene control region which is active in skeletal muscle (Sani, 1985, *Nature* 314:283-286), and gonadotropin releasing hormone gene control region which is active in the hypothalamus (Mason et al., 1986, *Science* 234:1372-1378).

Successful incorporation of antibody-based fusion gene constructs may be identified by three general approaches: (a) DNA-DNA hybridization, (b) presence or absence of "marker", gene functions, and (c) expression of inserted sequences. In the first approach, the presence of a foreign gene inserted in an expression vector can be detected by DNA-DNA hybridization using probes comprising sequences that are homologous to the inserted antibody fusion protein gene. In the second approach, the recombinant vector/host system can be identified and selected based upon the

presence or absence of certain "marker" gene functions (e.g., thymidine kinase activity, resistance to antibiotics such as G418, transformation phenotype, occlusion body formation in baculovirus, etc.) caused by the insertion of foreign genes in the vector. For example, if the antibody fusion gene is inserted so as to interrupt the marker gene sequence of the vector, recombinants containing the antibody fusion gene insert can be identified by the absence of the marker gene function. In the third approach, recombinant expression vectors can be identified by assaying the foreign gene product expressed by the recombinant. Such assays can be based, for example, on the physical or functional properties of the antibody fusion gene product in bioassay systems as described *infra*.

Once a particular recombinant DNA molecule is identified and isolated, several methods known in the art may be used to propagate it. Once a suitable host system and growth conditions are established, recombinant expression vectors can be propagated and prepared in quantity. As previously explained, the expression vectors which can be used include, but are not limited to, the following vectors or their derivatives: human or animal viruses such as vaccinia virus, adenovirus or retroviral based vectors; insect viruses such as baculovirus; yeast vectors; bacteriophage vectors (e.g., lambda), and plasmid and cosmid DNA vectors, to name but a few.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the promoter/enhancer and 3' regulatory sequences may all be derived from immunoglobulin genes.

5.2. EXPRESSION OF ANTIBODY FUSION PROTEINS

The recombinant constructs of the invention may be introduced into host cells which are capable of expressing the antibody-based fusion protein using any method known in the art, including transformation (for example, using DEAE-dextran or calcium phosphate techniques), transfection, microinjection, infection, cell gun, and electroporation. Any host cell type may be utilized provided that the antibody-based fusion protein recombinant nucleic acid sequences would be adequately transcribed into mRNA in that cell type. In specific embodiments of the invention, mouse myeloma cell lines which do not produce immunoglobulin, such as Sp2/0 or Ag8.653 may be used. In addition, the recombinant nucleic acid constructs of the invention may be used to create non-human transgenic animals capable of producing the antibody based fusion protein. In preferred embodiments of the invention, the host cell is a lymphoid cell. In specific embodiments of the invention, the host cell is a hybridoma derived heavy chain loss variant which expresses immunoglobulin light chains; in this embodiment, the parent hybridoma most preferably may be the source of the monoclonal antibody which comprises the immunoglobulin portions of the antibody-based fusion protein. Thus, for example, and not by way of limitation, the light-chain producing cell line derived from a hybridoma which produces monoclonal antibody "X" may be transfected with recombinant DNA encoding an antibody-based fusion protein which comprises a variable region of monoclonal antibody "X"; the antibody-based fusion protein may combine with endogenous light chain and thereby re-create the antigen binding site of monoclonal antibody "X".

Alternatively, recombinant nucleic acids encoding both antibody-based fusion protein and corresponding or compatible immunoglobulin light chain may be cotransfected into a cell line which is preferably of lymphoid origin. In yet a further embodiment of the invention, the antibody fusion protein encoding sequences may be introduced into the immunoglobulin locus of a lymphoid cell line by homologous recombination according to methods set forth in EP patent application publication No. 0 315 062, by Bristol-Myers Comp. filed October 27, 1988, which is incorporated by reference in its entirety herein.

Antibody-based fusion protein produced by the host cell may be collected using any technique known in the art, including, but not limited to, affinity chromatography using target antigen or antibody specific for any portion of the fusion protein including, for example, anti-idiotype antibody. The activity of the fused lymphokine may be confirmed using biological assays which detect or measure the activity of the lymphokine. If IL-2 is comprised by the antibody fusion protein, the presence of IL-2 activity may be confirmed in assays which detect T-cell proliferation.

The present invention provides for dimeric immunoglobulin molecules as well as monomeric or multimeric molecules comprising antibody based fusion proteins.

5.3. UTILITY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides for antibody based fusion proteins that may be used to deliver IL-2 to specific target cells or tissues.

In various embodiments of the invention, an antibody fusion protein may comprise variable region sequences which recognize a tumor specific antigen. According to a specific embodiment of the invention, the variable region sequences are derived from L6, a monoclonal antibody which reacts with an antigen present on human non-small cell lung carcinoma and a number of other carcinomas, including breast and colon carcinoma. If the antibody fusion molecule which recognizes a tumor specific antigen also comprises a lymphokine, it may be used to alter the immune response in the area of the tumor cells. For example, as shown in Example Section 7, *infra*, an antibody fusion protein comprising IL-2 and the L6 variable region retains IL-2 activity. The IL-2/L6 fusion protein may be used to target IL-2 to tumor cells; con-

sequently, activated T-cells in the vicinity of the tumor will be induced to proliferate, thereby amplifying the anti-tumor immune response. It should be noted that current immunotherapy often involves systemic administration of lymphokines at a concentration that is intended to effectively boost anti-tumor activity but which necessarily affects lymphocytes and tissues throughout the body. In the case of IL-2, severe and potentially fatal clinical reactions may occur.

5 The present invention offers the advantage of decreasing systemic exposure to lymphokine; antibody-mediated targeting allows for less total lymphokine to be administered and substantially decreases the exposure of non-tumor tissues to lymphokine, thereby minimizing toxic effects. In a further specific embodiment, a PF4/L6 antibody may be used to inhibit angiogenesis at a tumor site and thereby inhibit tumor growth.

10 The antibody fusion proteins may be administered to a patient in need of such treatment in any sterile pharmaceutical carrier which will maintain the solubility and activity of the protein. It may be desirable to administer antibody fusion proteins in conjunction with other treatment modalities, including antibodies and/or antibody fusion proteins comprising additional growth factors.

15 **6. EXAMPLE: CONSTRUCTION AND EXPRESSION OF A PLATELET FACTOR 4/L6 ANTIBODY FUSION PROTEIN
WITH PLATELET FACTOR 4 ACTIVITY (not part of the present invention)**

20 **6.1. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

25 **6.1.1. CONSTRUCTION OF AN EXPRESSION CASSETTE FOR AN ANTIBODY-BASED FUSION PROTEIN**

30 A recombinant vector system was created to accommodate sequences encoding novel protein structure in the correct reading frame with the hinge region of the human IgG₁ constant region. Initially, the constant region exon encoding the C_{H1} domain of human IgG₁ was cloned as a HindIII/PstI fragment into the vector pUC18 (Fig. 1). Downstream of these sequences was cloned a 1.6 kb PstI/KpnI fragment containing a portion of the 3' flanking region of the murine C_H gene that includes the RNA cleavage/polyadenylation sites used in the expression of mRNA encoding the secretory form of IgM heavy chain. A portion of the vector polylinker was retained between the two fragments for subsequent additions.

35 A pair of oligonucleotides was generated that when annealed encode a modified version of the human hinge region sequences of human IgG₁. The two cysteines that normally mediate interchain disulfide linkage between heavy chains were replaced with codons specifying proline and serine, and several amino acids were added to the carboxy terminus such that the entire hinge region sequence is: EPKSCDKTHTPPPSPGRRVVGGR. The annealed oligonucleotide pair has a PstI compatible overhang on the 5' end, includes the normal splice acceptor site for the hinge exon, and retains another suitable overhang for linkage with additional oligonucleotides at the 3' end. A second pair of oligonucleotides was designed to overlap with the first set and provide compatible ends for ligation with an NcoI overhang.

40 **35 6.1.2. INSERTION OF PLATELET FACTOR 4 ENCODING SEQUENCES INTO ANTIBODY FUSION PROTEIN CAS-
SETTE**

45 The cDNA clone encoding human platelet factor 4 (PF₄) was linked as an NcoI/BamI fragment in frame with the hinge region by ligation into the PstI/BamI sites of the vector with the two pairs of oligonucleotides at the 5' end (Fig. 2). The fusion construct was then transferred to a vector that contains a dominant selectable marker (NEO) for expression in mammalian cells (Fig. 3), and then a gene segment encoding a heavy chain variable region of the desired specificity was inserted just upstream.

50 **45 6.1.3. EXPRESSION OF PLATELET FACTOR 4/L6 FUSION PROTEIN**

55 The construct was transfected into a murine myeloma cell line expressing the chimeric light chain and supernatants were screened for production of heavy/light assembled protein using anti-idiotypic antibodies specific for L6 V region determinants. Clones were established that tested positive for the presence of assembled heavy and light chain.

60 **50 6.2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

65 The first example of an immunoglobulin fusion protein generated by this design incorporated the sequence of human platelet factor 4 downstream as part of the L6 chimeric heavy chain. Platelet factor 4 has been reported to have several biological activities of interest including heparin binding, antagonism of angiogenesis, inhibition of suppressor T lymphocyte development, chemotaxis for inflammatory cells, etc.

70 The growth and production characteristics (as determined by the Id/Id assay) for two clones are shown in Fig. 4. As can be seen by comparison with purified chimeric L6 as a standard, substantial amounts of Id bearing protein is pro-

duced, although it should be emphasized that chimeric L6 is a bivalent molecule that probably reacts somewhat differently than a chimeric F(ab) in this assay.

Culture supernatants from a clonal cell line were used to establish the PF4 nature of the heavy chain fusion protein. ELISA plates were coated with goat antisera specific for human platelet factor 4 (a kind gift from Dr. Karen Kaplan, Columbia University). Supernatant from the producing clone was then added jointly in the presence of various concentrations of purified PF4 protein (Sigma), or media only. The plate was subsequently developed with the biotinylated 13B anti-idiotype which recognizes an L6 combinatorial determinant, and avidin-HRP (TAGO). Fig. 5 shows a plot of the percent inhibition of the detectable signal with increasing amounts of the PF4 protein. No inhibition was observed by coincubation with chimeric L6 protein.

Since PF4 is normally capable of binding to heparin, that biological activity was characterized for the assembled fusion protein. Culture supernatant or media spiked with chimeric L6 protein was adsorbed on heparin-sepharose. The amount of assembled protein was measured by an anti-Id assay requiring the presence of both light chain and combinatorial determinants (15B capture and 14B biotinylated to detect). The concentration before and after incubation with heparin-sepharose is shown in Table 1.

15

TABLE 1

Adsorption of L6PF ₄ and ChimFab to Heparin-Sepharose			
Sup	Conc (ng/ml) ¹⁾		Heparin bound (%)
	Before ads	After ads	
6B3.7subcl6	137	<5	<96
ChimFab	64	64	0

¹⁾Expressed in ChimL6 eq. (15B - 14Bbio Elisa)

demonstrating that greater than 95% of the assembled Ig fusion protein is removable by heparin, a property not associated with the chimeric L6 molecule. The L6/PF4 fusion protein was also shown to bind to human tumor cells by FACS analysis using antisera specific for human Fab or human PF4.

These studies demonstrate that the basic design described here is useful for generating heavy chain fusion proteins that maintain dual characteristics and can be expressed at reasonable levels.

7. EXAMPLE: CONSTRUCTION AND EXPRESSION OF AN INTERLEUKIN-2/L6 ANTIBODY FUSION PROTEIN HAVING INTERLEUKIN-2 ACTIVITY

7.1. MATERIALS AND METHODS

7.1.1. CONSTRUCTION OF AN EXPRESSION VECTOR FOR THE IL-2 ANTIBODY FUSION PROTEIN

A slightly different strategy was employed for the generation of L6/IL2 fusion protein, shown in Fig. 6. These constructs began with the same pUC18C gamma₁ 3'UT shown in Fig. 2. This vector was opened with PstI and BamHI to receive three DNA fragments. The first fragment was a pair of oligonucleotides encoding a modified version of the human hinge region in which the cysteines that normally mediate intermolecular linkage to another heavy chain have been replaced with codons specifying proline and serine (shown as hinge in Fig. 7). The second section was formed by another pair of oligonucleotides (IL2 hinge gene linker sequence in Fig. 7) that has a 5' compatible overhang with that of the hinge pair, and a 3' overhang compatible with that of NcoI. This restriction site encompasses a codon specifying methionine and had been used for cloning the PF4 gene into bacterial expression vectors. The third component was the segment encoding the desired effector function (novel gene in Fig. 6) with an NcoI overhang at the 5' end and a BamHI overhang at the 3' end to complete ligation into the vector.

A separate construct was created by using oligonucleotides that encode each of the three cysteines normally present in the human IgG₁ hinge region, but with a stop codon immediately following the hinge sequence (Fig. 7 (Fab')₂).

Each assembled sequence was then transferred as a HindIII/Eco RI fragment to a vector containing a dominantly selectable gene (NEO) for transfection into eukaryotic cells. Subsequent to this step, either the cloned fragment encoding the L6 heavy chain variable region, or the 2.3 kb HindIII fragment used for direct gene targeting to the IgH locus, was cloned just upstream.

In the case of IL2, the coding region was generated using the polymerase chain reaction (PCR). The overall proce-

ture is outlined in Fig. 8. Peripheral blood cells from normal human donors were stimulated for 6 hours with anti-CD3 and anti-CD28 to elicit the production of IL2 RNA by the T cells within the population. Total cellular RNA was then extracted from these cells and a single strand cDNA copy of the IL2 message was generated using primer IL2-3' as shown in Fig. 8. The portion of the IL2 coding region specified in Fig. 9 was amplified from this cDNA by the polymerase chain reaction using the primers IL2-5' and IL2-3' (Fig. 8). The 3' portion of each primer is perfectly homologous to the IL2 sequence, whereas the 5' region of each primer is mismatched to include an NcoI site at the 5' end and a BamH site at the 3' end of the final product. This PCR product was cloned as a blunt fragment into the SmaI site of pUC19 for sequencing. Once the IL2 sequence was confirmed the coding region was transferred as an NcoI/BamH fragment to the puc18C γ 13' UT plasmid as described above.

10

7.2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

7.2.1. EXPRESSION OF IL-2/L6 ANTIBODY FUSION PROTEIN

15 The L6/IL2 heavy chain fusion vector was cotransfected along with the chimeric light chain vector shown in Fig. 10 into either the Ag8.653 or Sp2/0 non-Ig producing murine plasmacytoma cell line. Selection was performed using G418 and resistant cell populations were tested for production of both heavy and light chain using a pair of anti-idiotypes, one specific for the L6 light chain variable region and the other specific for the heavy chain variable region of L6. A single clone from the Ag8 transfection (10^3 A4) was chosen for further study.

20

7.2.2. ASSAYS FOR BIFUNCTIONAL ACTIVITY OF THE FUSION PROTEIN

25 Culture supernatant from this cell line was used to demonstrate the dual functionality of the fusion protein in the following way. The human tumor cells (1×10^4) that bear the L6 antigen were irradiated and incubated with either median 20 μ ml of chimeric L6, 10^3 A4 supernatant, supernatant plus 20 μ ml of murine L6 antibody, or supernatant plus 20 μ ml of L6 anti-idiotype 14B. The cells were incubated for 30 minutes, on ice, washed, and then mixed with 2×10^4 CTLL-2 cells which proliferate in response to IL2. The proliferation was measured as a function of 3 H-thymidine incorporation and the results were as follows:

30

TABLE I

3347s w/	CPM	%INHIB
Media	8950	
cL6	12151	
10^3 A4 Sup	78731	
Sup + L6	11238	97
Sup + anti-id	13690	93

40

8. DEPOSIT OF MICROORGANISMS

45 The following microorganisms have been deposited with the Agricultural Research Culture Collection, Northern Regional Research Center (NRRL) and have been assigned the following accession numbers:

50

microorganism	plasmid	Accession No.
E.coli-DH5 α	pPF-4/L6	B-18595
E.coli-DH5 α	pIL-2/L6	B-18589

55 The present invention is not to be limited in scope by the specific embodiments described herein. Indeed, various modifications of the invention in addition to those described herein will become apparent to those skilled in the art from the foregoing description and accompanying figures. Such modifications are intended to fall within the scope of the appended claims.

Claims

Claims for the following Contracting States : AT, BE, CH, LI, DE, DK, FR, GB, GR, IT, LU, NL, SE

- 5 1. A recombinant antibody-based fusion protein comprising
 - (i) a portion of an immunoglobulin molecule capable of directing the fusion protein to a tumor cell or a tumor-associated antigen, and
 - 10 (ii) an interleukin 2 molecule capable of promoting lymphocyte proliferation.
2. The fusion protein of claim 1 in which the portion of the immunoglobulin molecule competitively inhibits the binding of monoclonal antibody L6.
- 15 3. The fusion protein of claim 1 or 2 wherein the portion of the immunoglobulin molecule is the variable region derived from monoclonal antibody L6.
4. The fusion protein of claims 1 to 3 comprising a portion corresponding to the hinge region of an immunoglobulin molecule wherein the cystein residues normally mediating interchain disulfide linkage are replaced so as to permit 20 greater flexibility of the fused molecule.
5. The use of at least one antibody-based fusion protein according to anyone of claims 1 to 4 for preparing a pharmaceutical composition for treating tumors.
- 25 6. The use of claim 5 for preparing a pharmaceutical composition increasing an antitumor immune response.
7. A recombinant microorganism as deposited with NRRL and having the accession number B-18589.
8. A recombinant DNA molecule encoding a fusion protein of anyone of claims 1 to 4.

30 Claims for the following Contracting State : ES

1. A method of preparing a recombinant antibody-based fusion protein comprising
 - (i) a portion of an immunoglobulin molecule capable of directing the fusion protein to a tumor cell or a tumor-associated antigen, and
 - (ii) an interleukin 2 molecule capable of promoting lymphocyte proliferation,
- 40 which method comprises providing said fusion protein in a manner known per se.
2. The method of claim 1 for preparing a fusion protein in which the portion of the immunoglobulin molecule competitively inhibits the binding of monoclonal antibody L6.
- 45 3. The method of claim 1 or 2 for preparing a fusion protein wherein the portion of the immunoglobulin molecule is the variable region derived from monoclonal antibody L6.
4. The method of claims 1 to 3 for preparing a fusion protein comprising a portion corresponding to the hinge region of an immunoglobulin molecule wherein the cystein residues normally mediating interchain disulfide linkage are 50 replaced so as to permit greater flexibility of the fused molecule.
5. A method of preparing a pharmaceutical composition for treating tumors which method comprises providing at least one antibody-based fusion protein defined according to anyone of claims 1 to 4, in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.
- 55 6. The method of claim 5 wherein the pharmaceutical composition increases an antitumor immune response.
7. A method of preparing a recombinant microorganism as deposited with NRRL and having the accession number

B-18589, which method comprises providing said microorganism in a manner known per se.

8. A method of preparing a recombinant DNA molecule encoding a fusion protein as defined in anyone of claims 1 to 4, which method comprises providing said DNA molecule in a manner known per se.

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Patentansprüche

Patentansprüche für folgende Vertragsstaaten : AT, BE, CH, LI, DE, DK, FR, GB, GR, IT, LU, NL, SE

10 1. Rekombinantes Fusionsprotein auf Antikörperbasis, umfassend:

(i) einen Abschnitt eines Immunglobulinmoleküls mit der Fähigkeit, das Fusionsprotein gegen eine Tumorzelle oder ein Tumor-assoziiertes Antigen zu richten, und

15 (ii) ein Interleukin 2-Molekül, das zur Förderung der Lymphocytenproliferation befähigt ist.

2. Fusionsprotein nach Anspruch 1, wobei der Abschnitt des Immunglobulinmoleküls die Bindung des monoklonalen Antikörpers L6 kompetitiv inhibiert.

20 3. Fusionsprotein nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, wobei der Abschnitt des Immunglobulinmoleküls die vom monoklonalen Antikörper L6 abgeleitete variable Region ist.

25 4. Fusionsprotein nach den Ansprüchen 1 bis 3, umfassend einen Abschnitt, welcher der Hinge Region eines Immunglobulinmoleküls entspricht, worin die Cysteinreste, die normalerweise die Disulfidbrückenbildung zwischen den Ketten vermitteln, ausgetauscht sind, um dem Fusionsmolekül größere Flexibilität zu verleihen.

30 5. Verwendung wenigstens eines Fusionsproteins auf Antikörperbasis nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 4 zur Herstellung eines pharmazeutischen Mittels zur Behandlung von Tumoren.

35 6. Verwendung nach Anspruch 5 zur Herstellung eines pharmazeutischen Mittels zur Verstärkung einer Antitumorimmunreaktion.

7. Rekombinanter Mikroorganismus, der bei NRRL hinterlegt wurde und die Hinterlegungsnummer B-18589 erhalten hat.

35 8. Rekombinantes DNA-Molekül, das für ein Fusionsprotein nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 4 kodiert.

Patenansprüche für folgenden Vertragsstaat : ES

40 1. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines rekombinanten Fusionsproteins auf Antikörperbasis, das umfaßt:

(i) einen Abschnitt eines Immunglobulinmoleküls mit der Fähigkeit, das Fusionsprotein gegen eine Tumorzelle oder ein Tumor-assoziiertes Antigen zu richten, und

45 (ii) ein Interleukin 2-Molekül, das zur Förderung der Lymphocytenproliferation befähigt ist,

wobei man das Fusionsprotein in an sich bekannter Weise bereitstellt.

50 2. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1, wobei der Abschnitt des Immunglobulinmoleküls die Bindung des monoklonalen Antikörpers L6 kompetitiv inhibiert.

3. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1 oder 2 zur Herstellung eines Fusionsproteins, wobei der Abschnitt des Immunglobulinmoleküls die vom monoklonalen Antikörper L6 abgeleitete variable Region ist.

55 4. Verfahren nach den Ansprüchen 1 bis 3 zur Herstellung eines Fusionsproteins, das einen Abschnitt umfaßt, welcher der Hinge Region eines Immunglobulinmoleküls entspricht, worin die Cysteinreste, die normalerweise die Disulfidbrückenbildung zwischen den Ketten vermitteln, ausgetauscht sind, um dem Fusionsmolekül größere Flexibilität zu verleihen.

5. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines pharmazeutischen Mittels zur Behandlung von Tumoren, wobei man wenigstens ein Fusionsprotein auf Antikörperbasis gemäß den Ansprüchen 1 bis 4 in einem pharmazeutisch verträglichen Träger bereitstellt.
- 5 6. Verfahren nach Anspruch 5, wobei das pharmazeutische Mittel eine Antitumor-Immunreaktion verstärkt.
7. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines rekombinanten Mikroorganismus, der bei NRRL hinterlegt wurde und die Hinterlegungsnummer B-18589 erhalten hat, wobei man den Mikroorganismus in an sich bekannter Weise bereitstellt.
- 10 8. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines rekombinanten DNA-Moleküls, das für ein Fusionsprotein nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 4 kodiert, wobei man das DNA-Molekül in an sich bekannter Weise bereitstellt.

Revendications

15 Revendications pour les Etats contractants suivants : AT, BE, CH, LI, DE, DK, FR, GB, GR, IT, LU, NL, SE

1. Protéine de fusion à base d'un anticorps recombinant comprenant
 - (i) une portion d'une molécule d'immunoglobuline capable de diriger la protéine de fusion vers une cellule de tumeur ou un antigène associé à une tumeur, et
 - (ii) une molécule d'interleukine 2 capable de favoriser la prolifération des lymphocytes.
2. Protéine de fusion de la revendication 1 dans laquelle la portion de la molécule d'immunoglobuline inhibe compétitivement la liaison d'un anticorps monoclonal L6.
- 25 3. Protéine de fusion de la revendication 1 ou 2 où la portion de la molécule d'immunoglobuline est la région variable dérivée de l'anticorps monoclonal L6.
4. Protéine de fusion des revendications 1 à 3 comprenant une portion correspondant à la région de charnière d'une molécule d'immunoglobuline où les résidus de cystéine normalement médiateurs de l'enchaînement de disulfure entre chaînes sont remplacés afin de permettre une plus grande flexibilité de la molécule fondue.
- 30 5. Utilisation d'au moins une protéine de fusion à base d'un anticorps selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4 pour la préparation d'une composition pharmaceutique pour le traitement des tumeurs.
- 35 6. Utilisation de la revendication 5 pour la préparation d'une composition pharmaceutique augmentant une réponse immunitaire anti-tumeur.
7. Microorganisme recombinant tel que déposé au NRRL et ayant le numéro d'accession B-18589.
- 40 8. Molécule d'ADN recombinant codant pour une protéine de fusion selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4.

Revendications pour l'Etat contractant suivant : ES

- 45 1. Méthode de préparation d'une protéine de fusion à base d'un anticorps recombinant comprenant
 - (i) une portion d'une molécule d'immunoglobuline capable de diriger la protéine de fusion vers une cellule de tumeur ou un antigène associé à une tumeur, et
 - (ii) une molécule d'interleukine 2 capable de favoriser la prolifération des lymphocytes,

laquelle méthode consiste à former ladite protéine de fusion d'une manière connue.
- 50 2. Méthode de la revendication 1 pour la préparation d'une protéine de fusion dans laquelle la portion de la molécule d'immunoglobuline inhibe compétitivement la liaison de l'anticorps monoclonal L6.
- 55 3. Méthode de la revendication 1 ou 2 pour la préparation d'une protéine de fusion où la portion de la molécule d'immunoglobuline est la région variable dérivée de l'anticorps monoclonal L6.

4. Méthode des revendications 1 à 3 pour la préparation d'une protéine de fusion comprenant une portion correspondant à la région de charnière d'une molécule d'immunoglobuline où les résidus de cystéine normalement médiateurs de l'enchaînement disulfure entre chaînes sont remplacés afin de permettre une plus grande flexibilité de la molécule fondue.
5. Méthode de préparation d'une composition pharmaceutique pour le traitement des tumeurs, laquelle méthode consiste à prévoir au moins une protéine de fusion à base d'un anticorps définie selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4 dans un support pharmaceutiquement acceptable.
- 10 6. Méthode de la revendication 5 où la composition pharmaceutique augmente une réponse immunitaire anti-tumeur.
7. Méthode de préparation d'un microorganisme recombinant tel que déposé au NRRL et ayant le numéro d'accèsion B-18589, laquelle méthode consiste à se procurer ledit microorganisme d'une manière connue.
- 15 8. Méthode de préparation d'une molécule d'ADN recombinant codant pour une protéine de fusion telle que définie selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4, laquelle méthode consiste à se procurer ladite molécule d'ADN d'une manière connue.

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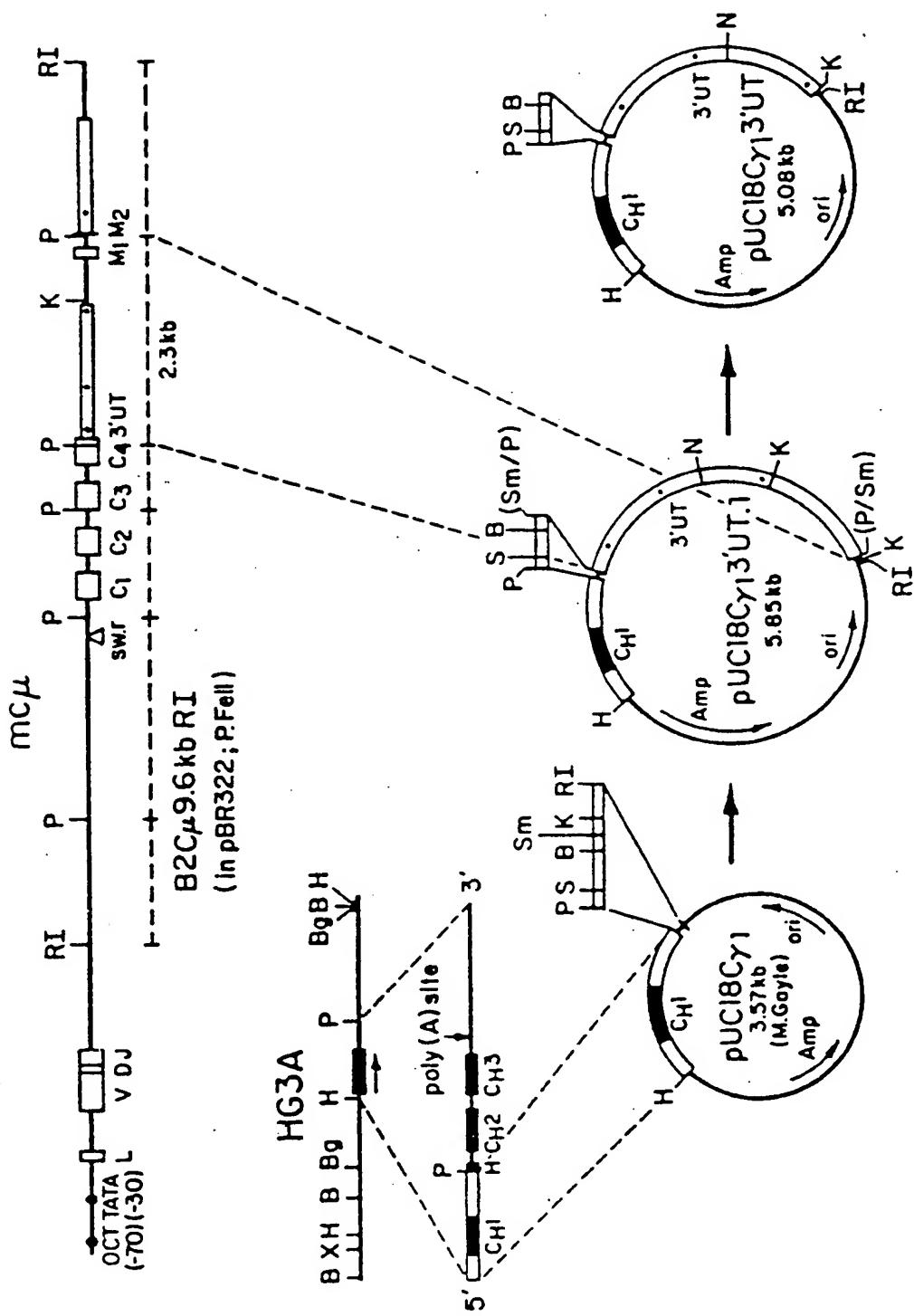
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Figure 1.



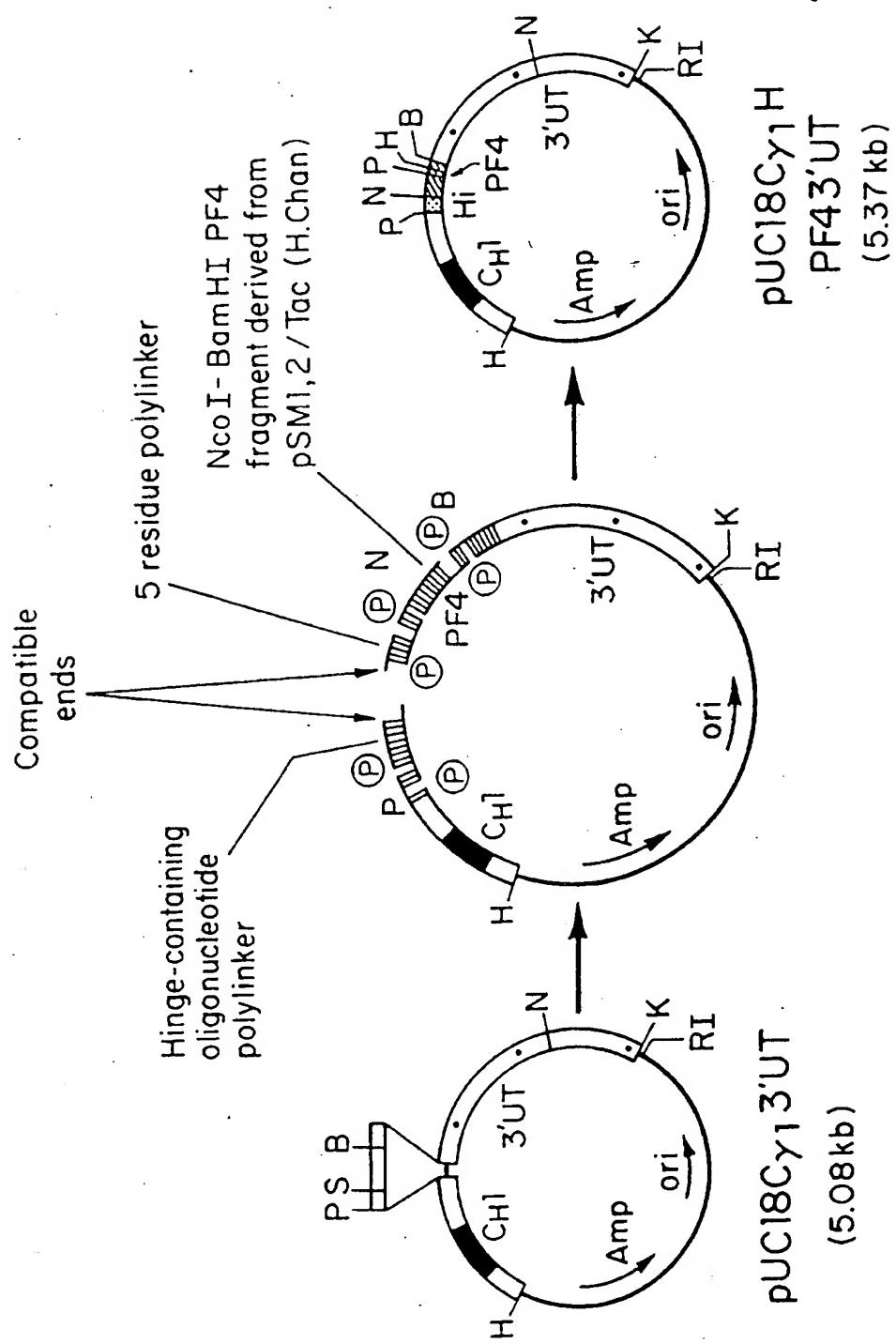


Figure 2

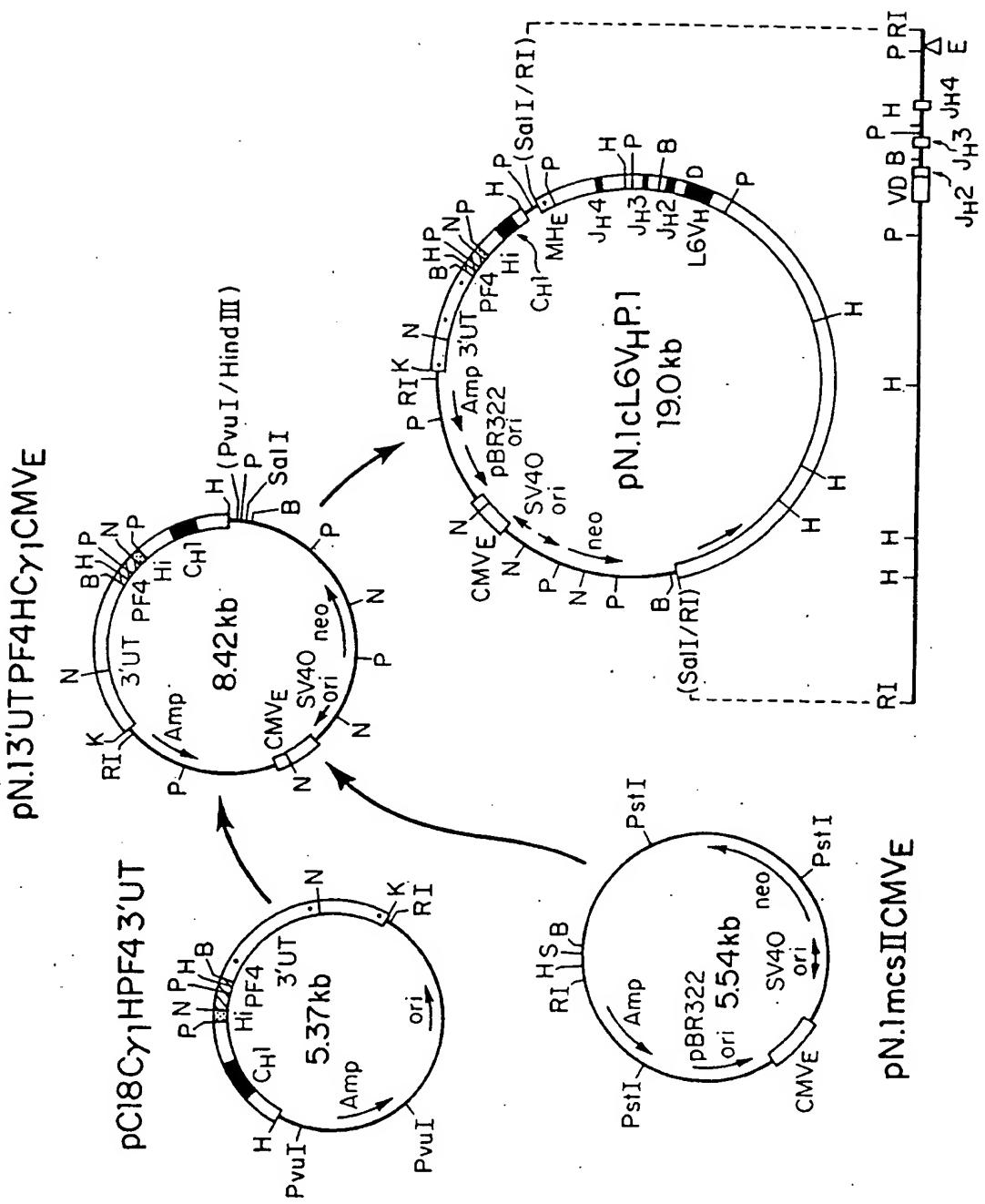
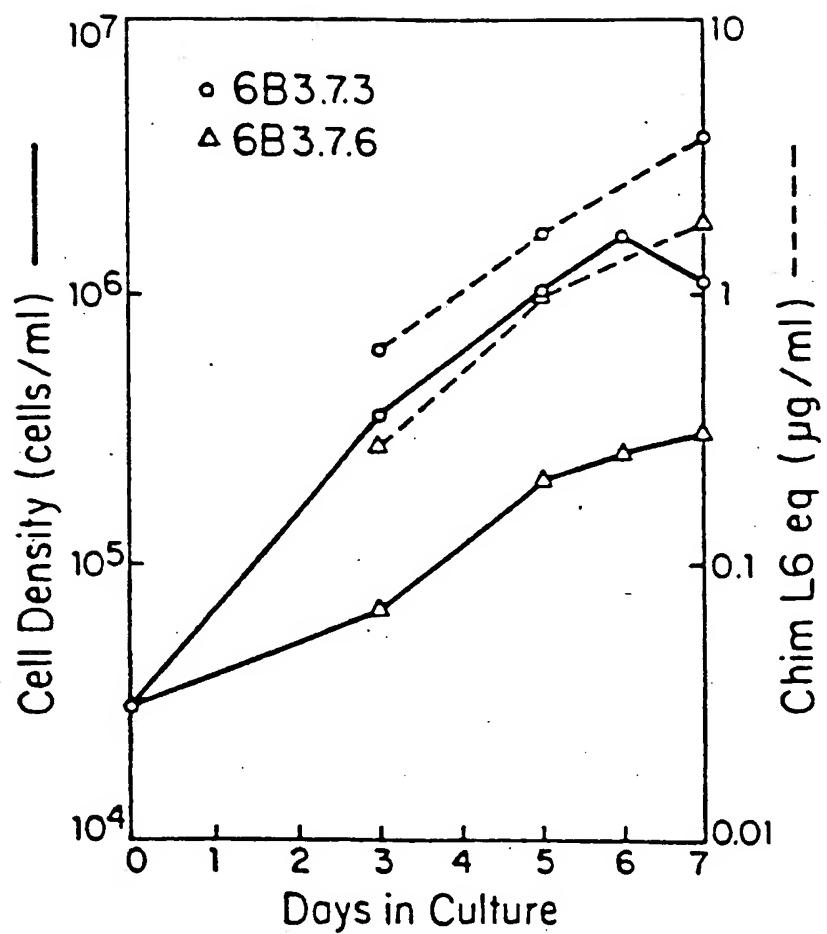


Figure 3

Figure 4.



L6 / PF4 vs PF4 Competition Assay

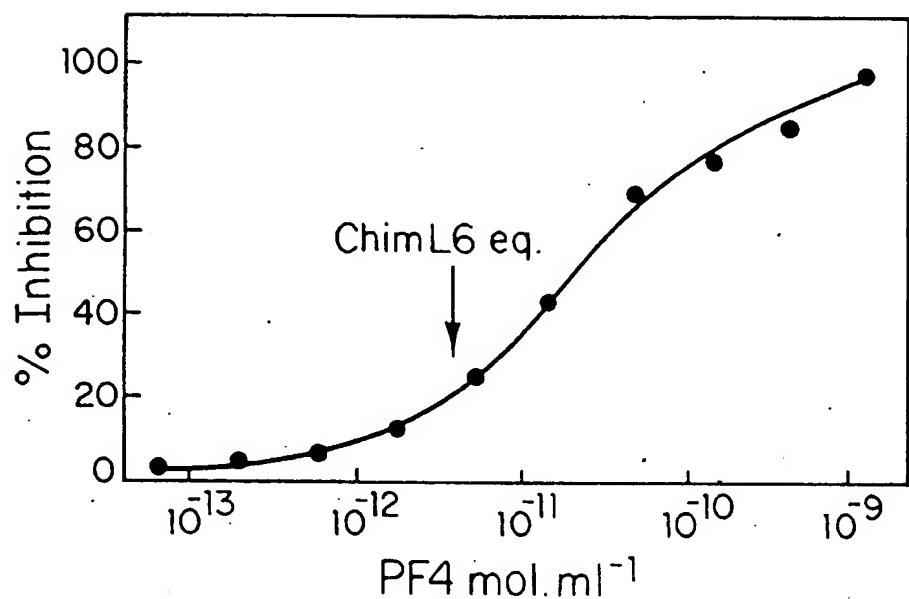


Figure 5

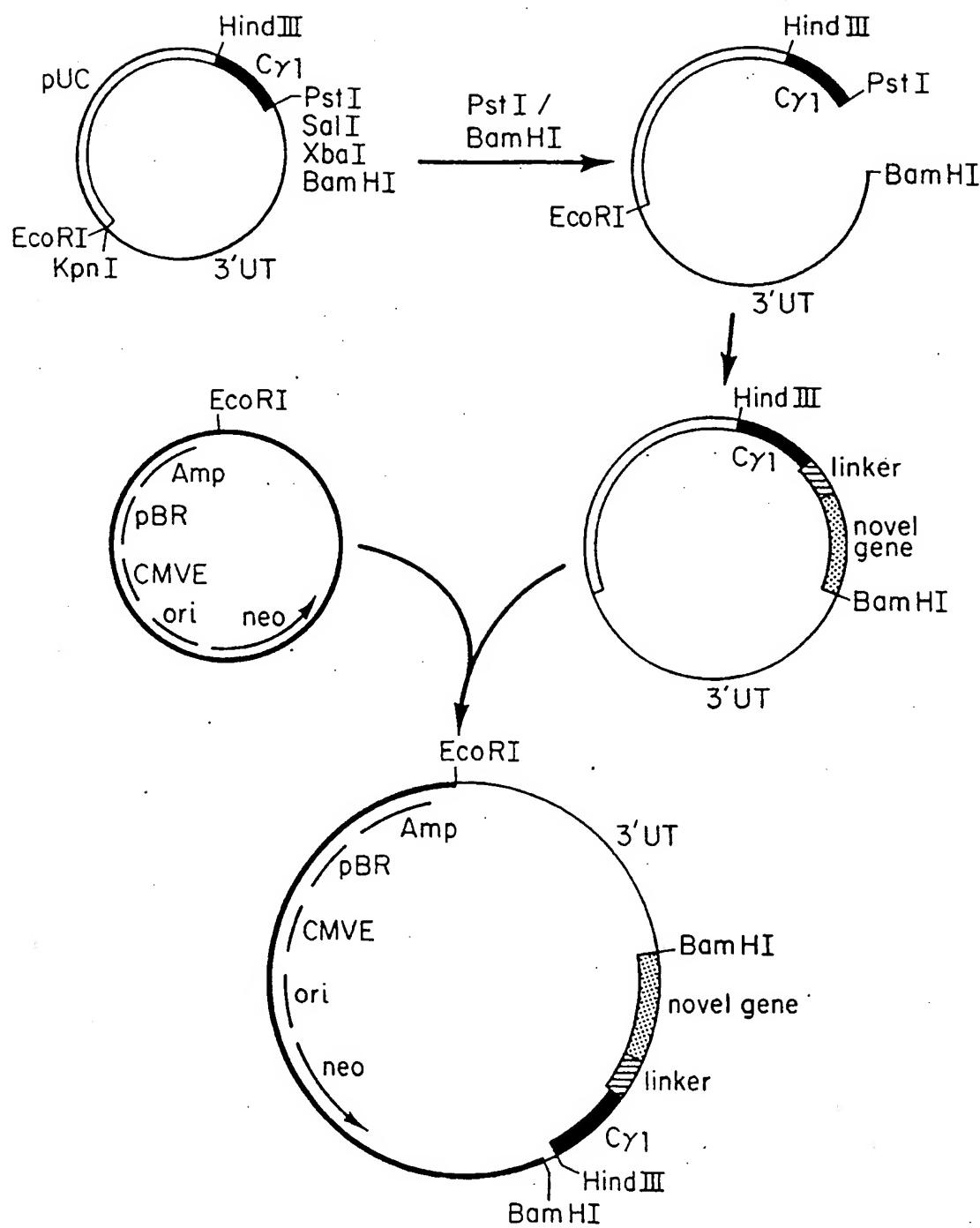


Figure 6A

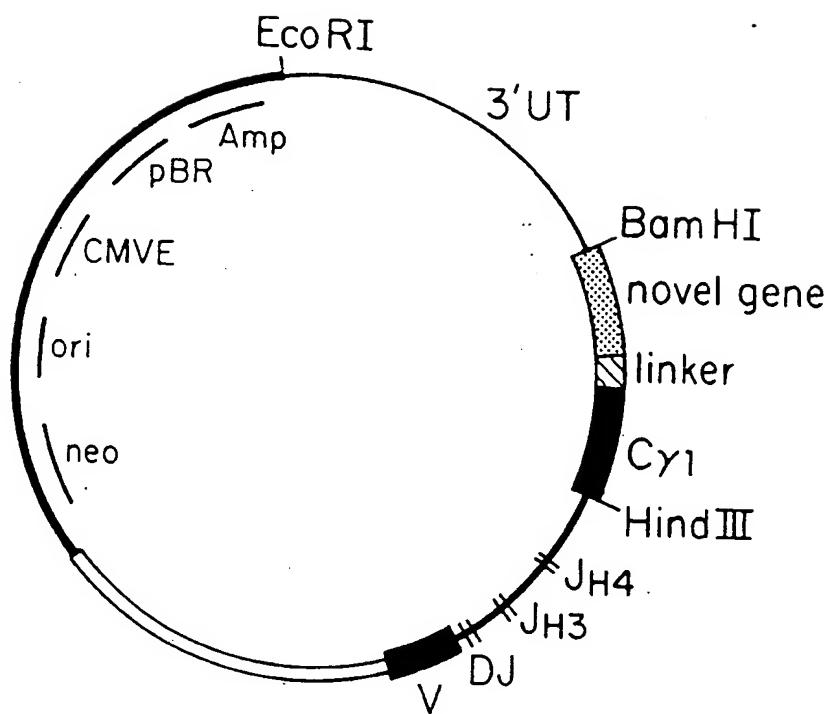


Figure 6B

Figure 7

Exact Hinge SequencesHINGE

E P K S C D K T H T P P S P G R V G G R A
 GAG CCC AAA TCC TGT GAC AAA ACT CAC ACA CCG CCA CCG TCC CCA GGA AGA GTG GTG GGG CG
 ACGT CTC GGG TTT AGG ACA CTG TTT TGA GTG TGT GGC AGG GGT CCT CCT CAC CAC CCC CCC GC TC GG

IL2Onco_M:

T
ACG

PF4:

Q	R
CAG	CGA
GTC	GCT

C	C
TGC	TGC
ACG	ACG

Stop	Stop
TGA	TGA
ACT	ACT

F(ab')2:Exact Hinge - Gene Linker Sequences

IL2: A V L R A M
 A GCC GTA CTG CGC GC
 A CAT GAC GCG CGG TAC

Figure 8.

Preparation of total cellular RNA from 5×10^7 CD3/CD28 stimulated PBL's (6 hr stimulation).
 Single strand cDNA by reverse transcriptase using IL-3' primer
 Polymerase chain reaction using IL2-5' and IL2-3' primers

IL2-5' primer G TCA ACC ATG GCA CCT ACT TCA ACT TCT ACA AAG
IL2 mRNA GTC ACA AAC AGT GCA CCT ACT TCA AGT TCT ACA AAG AAA AC CAG. . . . 342 nucl.

Nco I

IL2-3' primer

Stop

...CAAAGCATCATCTCAACACATAACTTGATAATTAAAGTGC...
 GTTTCTGTAGTAGAGTTGTGATTGAACCTCCTAGGAAGTC
BamHI

Blunt end ligation into PUC19 (SmaI site) confirmation of sequence
 Digestion with NcoI + BamHi for placement of pUC γ 13'UT vector with hinge and polylinker
 oligos.

Figure 9.

Human mRNA Encoding Interleukin-2 (IL-2)

	M Y R M Q	
ATCACTCTCT TTAATCACTA CTCACAGTAA CCTCAACTCC TGCCACAATG TACAGGATGC	60	
L L S C I A L S L A L V T N S A P T S S		
AACTCCTGTC TTGCATTGCA CTAAGTCTTG CACTTGTAC AACAGTGCA CCTACTTCAA	120	
S T K K T Q L Q L E H L L L D L Q M I L		
GTTCTACAAA GAAAACACAG CTACAACCTGG AGCATTACT GCTGGATTAA CAGATGATTT	180	
N G I N N Y K N P K L T R M L T F K F Y		
TGAATGGAAT TAATAATTAC AAGAATCCC AACTCACCA GATGCTCACAA TTTAAGTTT	240	
M P K K A T E L K H L Q C L E E E L K P		
ACATGCCCAA GAAGGCCACA GAACTGAAAC ATCTTCAGTG TCTAGAAGAA GAACTCAAAC	300	
L E E V L N L A Q S K N F H L R P R D L		
CTCTGGAGGA AGTGCTAAAT TTAGCTCAA GCAAAAAACTT TCACTTAAGA CCCAGGGACT	360	
I S N I N V I V L E L K G S E T T F M C		
TAATCAGCAA TATCAACGTA ATAGTTCTGG AACTAAAGGG ATCTGAAACA ACATTCAATGT	420	
E Y A D E T A T I V E F L N R W I T F C		
GTGAATATGC TGATGAGACA GCAACCATTG TAGAATTCT GAACAGATGG ATTACCTTT	480	
Q S I I S T L T		
GTCAGGAGCAT CACCTCAACA CTAACCTGAT ATTAAGTGC TTCCCACTTA AAACATATCA	540	
GGCCTCTAT TTATTTAAAT ATTTAAATTT TATATTTATT GTTGAATGTA TGGTTTGCTA	600	
CCTATTGTAA CTATTATTCT TAATCTAAA ACTATAAATA TGGATCTTT ATGATTCTTT	660	
TTGTAAGCCC TAGGGGCTCT AAAATGGTTT CACTTATTAA TCCCAAATA TTTATTATTA	720	
TGTTGAATGT TAAATATAGT ATCTATGTAG ATTGGTTAGT AAAACTATTT AATAAATTG	780	
ATAAATATAA AAAAAAAA C	801	

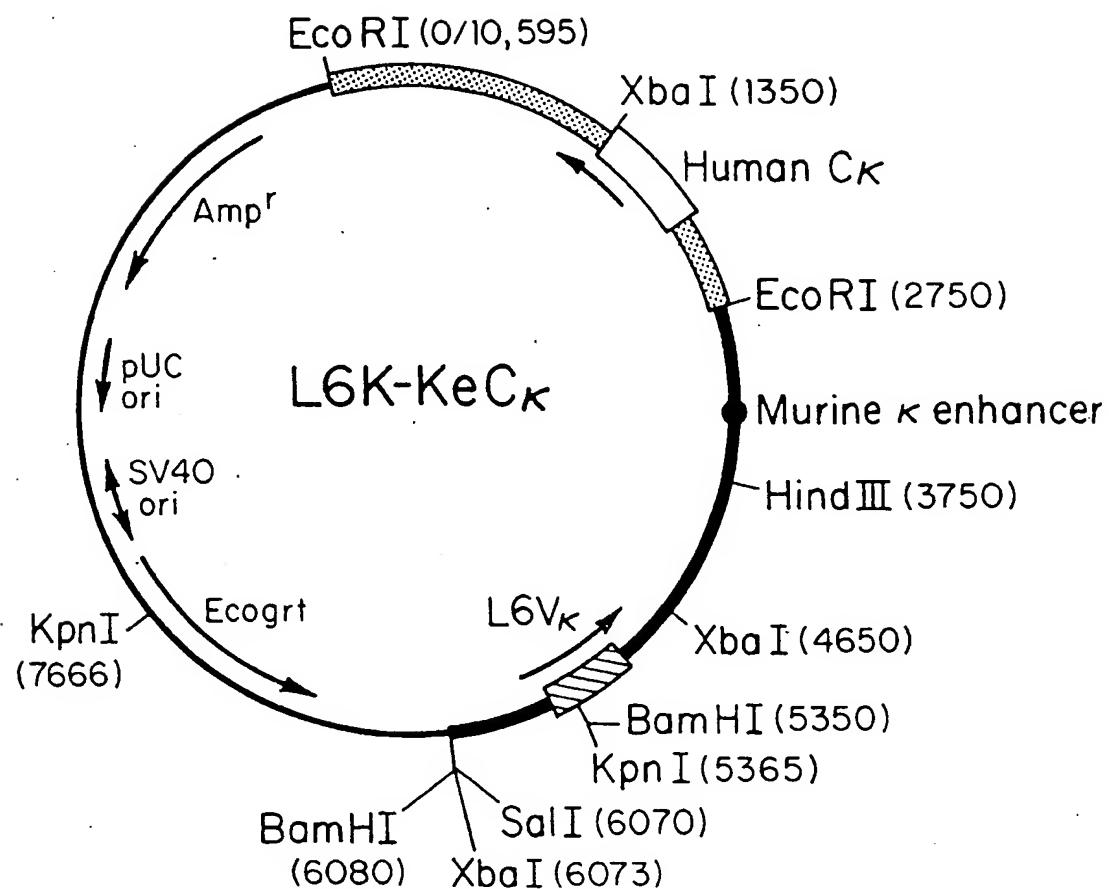


Figure 10

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